

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1315

USIAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: PMAC PLANS MAJOR RESTRUCTURING OF MEDIA

ACCORDING TO HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCES IN MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY COUNCIL (PMAC) IS PLANNING SWEEPING CHANGES IN THE MININFO STRUCTURE. OUR CONTACTS SAY CHANGES WILL INCLUDE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

1. THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION WILL BE COMPLETELY REORGANIZED AND WILL NO RPT NO LONGER BE A MINISTRY.
2. THE MEDIA -- NEWSPAPERS, RADIO, TELEVISION AND THE ETHIOPIAN NEWS AGENCY (ENA) -- WILL BE AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND REPORT DIRECTLY TO A PMAC BOARD.
3. THE POSITION OF MINISTER OF INFORMATION, CURRENTLY HELD BY LIJ MICHAEL IMRU, WILL BE ABOLISHED. (ACCORDING TO SOURCES, MICHAEL IMRU WILL BE GIVEN HIGH GOVERNMENT POSITION AND MANY FEEL HE WILL BE REINSTALLED AS PRIME MINISTER, JOB HE OCCUPIED BRIEFLY AFTER OVERTHROW OF EMPEROR.)
4. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ETHIOPIAN HERALD WILL BE PUBLISHED WEEKLY INSTEAD OF DAILY.

5. THE FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY ADDIS SOIR WILL BE ABOLISHED.

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(ADDIS SOIR HAS LONG BEEN A MONEY LOSING PROPOSITION AND WAS

PRINTED PRIMARILY FOR EMPEROR AND OTHER FRENCH-SPEAKING MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET. LESS THAN FIVE HUNDRED COPIES ARE PRINTED DAILY AND ABOUT ONE HUNDRED COPIES ARE ACTUALLY SOLD.)

6. YEZAIRITU ETHIOPIA, THE MASS CIRCULATION AMHARIC WEEKLY, WILL BECOME A SOCIALIST POLITICAL ORGAN. ITS ENTIRE CONTENT WILL DEAL WITH SOCIALIST THEMES, FEATURES AND OTHER MATERIAL SUPPORTING ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM.

7. THE AMHARIC DAILY ADDIS ZEMEN WILL REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED, BUT THERE WILL BE A HEAVIER EMPHASIS ON SOCIALIST MATERIAL.

8. THE EDITORIALS AND MANY SUB-EDITORS OF THE DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS WILL BE REPLACED BY "YOUNGER AND MORE PROGRESSIVE PERSONNEL." (AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MANY OF THESE CHANGES HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE. THE MORE PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS REFERRED TO ARE THOSE THAT UNSTINTINGLY SUPPORT THE PMAC.)

9. THE BROADCAST MEDIA WILL CONTINUE TO BEEF UP AMHARIC AND OTHER REGIONAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING, WHILE REDUCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE BROADCASTS AND PROGRAMS.

COMMENT

WE HAVE NO INDICATION AT THIS TIME WHEN CHANGES WILL TAKE PLACE, BUT ACCORDING TO CONTACTS IT WILL BE VERY SOON. ALL MEDIA DEPARTMENTS ARE HAVING ALMOST DAILY MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF PMAC TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF TRANSITION.
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